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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT WEDNESDAY, January 18, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "FOREST NEWS." Information from the Forest Service, U.S.D.A.

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Forests owned by communities are on the increase, listeners. The latest report from the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says that community forests in this country now number 15 hundred and include more than 142 million trees! Most of this planting dates only as far back as 1910. Since then cities, counties, towns, villages and even schools have been planting forests for timber crops and watershed protection and also as recreation centers. Some communities have planted forests to help reduce local taxes when the trees come into production. The Forest Service estimates that in time such properly managed forests can yield from 3 to 5 dollars an acre every year.

New York is one of the States most interested in community forests. To encourage communities to own their own forests, this State furnishes the trees free. To date some 70 million trees have been planted by New York cities or counties or schools on idle or abandoned land. Nine counties have planted from 2 to 3 and a half million trees each. And cities have planted from 5 hundred thousand to over 3 million trees. Maybe you'd like to know which cities in New York State have been wise enough to plant trees for their future citizens. They are: Rochester, Middletown, Little Falls, Glens Falls, Carthage, Oneonta and Gloversville. Beside these, New York City has planted more than 5 million 5 hundred thousand trees on its 3 watersheds.

Of course, New York is not the only State with a fine record for community forests. Wisconsin is another. About 32 million trees have been planted on 25 county forests in Wisconsin. And about a million trees have been set out in 149 school forests.

Then, in Massachusetts 102 towns own forests which have a total of 6 and a half million trees. Beside these, the State has 75 watershed forests. And Boston's Metropolitan Water District has planted a million and a half trees.

Other States with good records in community forests are Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Vermont, New Jersey, Washington, Georgia, North Carolina and Ohio. Probably still another 5 million trees have been put out on community-owned land in Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and several other States.

Altogether these community forests of the country total some 3 million acres of land. That's a good start, says the Forest Service, but it's only a start. This Nation needs at least 20 million acres--at least 10 thousand community forests instead of 15 hundred. Our timber is still being cut faster than it can grow.

Mr. F.A. Silcox, chief of the Forest Service, says, that a timber shortage in this country is entirely unnecessary, yet in many regions the timber is already so depleted that forest products have to be shipped in by long and costly hauls. In many parts of the country, forest industries and jobs are being curtailed. Yet thousands of families could find work in place of public dole by restoring forests on millions of acres of exploited and idle forest lands. This work could create new wealth and help underwrite a permanent and a more prosperous civilization.

The United States now has 630 million acres of forest land but more than 168 million acres of it no longer is producing usable timber and timber products. Only half of the commercial forest land now bears trees of saw timber sizes, and 72 million acres have been so abused that they are virtually a no-man's land.

Many people believe that this destructive kind of timbering is past history - is not being done anymore. Mr. Silcox says that unfortunately such practices are still going on, all over the country. In every region of the country new mills are being set up and older ones are being run with little or no consideration for the future--little or no attempt to cut trees according to the available forest resource or the power of forest lands to produce.

Mr. Silcox urges a nation-wide forest policy and plan of action. He says that such a policy should recognize that some 630 million acres, more valuable in forests than for any other purpose, must be protected from fire, insects, disease and men who would exploit and destroy them. Forests are crops, so they should be managed in such a way as to assure full and continuous use.

Mr. Silcox says that the public can do its share in helping save forest lands now owned privately and still capable of commercial production. Such lands total 341 million acres. Of these 139 million acres are farm woodlands or forests. If the country is to prosper, Mr. Silcox says private owners must recognize their obligation in looking after these trees. And the public must do its share through more cooperation in fire protection, forest industries, more farm woodlands and research that will help in saving trees.

Today a good many women's clubs are doing their part toward tree planting and conservation. The Forest Service is always glad to send free bulletins or other information to clubs or individuals interested in this big job of conserving our forests.

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